Main Street Plan
Frequently Asked Questions

What are the two phases of the Downtown Main Street plan? Why is this a two-phased plan?

Phase I of the plan is a Striping Plan – in other words, what can be accomplished within the street (between the curbs) using paint only. The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NC DOT) owns and maintains the roadway, and this section of Main Street is on their schedule to be resurfaced in 2021. The Striping Plan is what the City provides to NC DOT to tell them how paint the lines back after resurfacing has happened.

Phase II of the plan is a Master Plan – in other words, a concept plan for what could be built in the future to re-envision the street in a way that tries to strike a balance between being more pedestrian and bicycle friendly, providing space for on-street parking, while still allowing traffic to move through without increased delay.

What brought about the need for this plan?

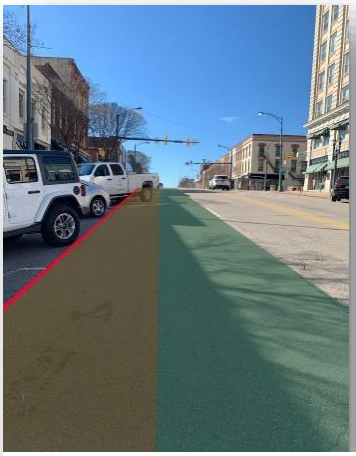
While there was a previous proposal to change Main Street in 2004, the origins of this plan are the Behind the Curb series hosted by Downtown Salisbury Inc. in 2016. At that time, making pedestrian and bike improvements was one of the top-rated priorities of the stakeholders who participated.

When the City was informed of NC DOT's resurfacing schedule, the City began the process of hiring a design and engineering consultant (McAdams was selected) to explore concepts and present recommendations.

The current street design has been working for 100 years. Why change?

Main Street was likely paved for the first time during the 1920s with the advent of the car. Photos and video footage from the 1940s show the four-lane cross section with angled parking that exists today. Before Interstate 85 was built, Main Street (NC 29) was the primary highway connecting Salisbury to cities to the north and south; however, since then the traffic volumes on Main Street have been significantly lower and have remained steady for years. Current volumes are estimated at between 5,000 and 9,000 daily.

There are aspects of the current street layout that are unusual and do pose some safety concerns. The shallow parking angle (30 degrees) often means that large vehicles stick out into one of the travel lanes, causing vehicles to need to merge unexpectedly. Parking next to a large vehicle also means that cars backing up have to do so blindly.

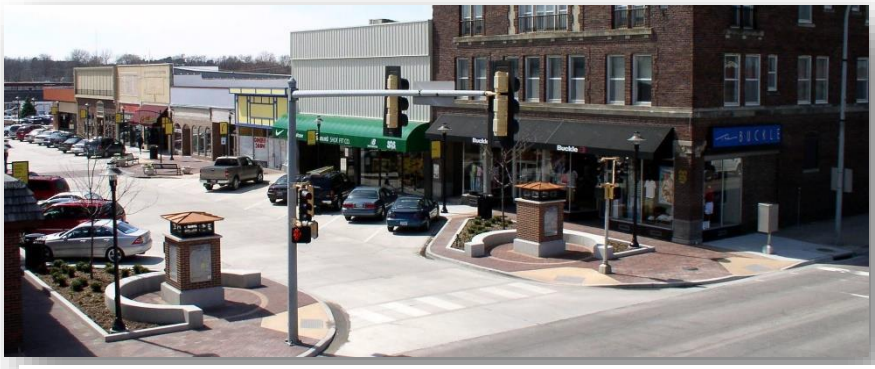


Large trucks often stick out into travel lanes with current 30 degree angled parking. This truck projects 5 feet into the travel lane.

People's expectations for downtowns have also changed. Especially amid the COVID-19 pandemic, have been increased demands for outdoor dining space. People go downtown as an alternative to indoor malls or big box stores, not only for the uniqueness of merchandise found in stores, but for the experience. A streetscape that carves space out for pedestrians means that they might stroll through downtown, spend more time downtown, and spend more money downtown! In that regard, streetscape projects can be regarded as economic development projects.

Why is the recommendation to go from 4 lanes to 3 lanes?

At early public input sessions (Fall 2019) a primary take-away was that people were concerned about the availability of on-street parking. Changing the angle of the parking from the current, shallow 30 degree angle to a proposed, steeper 45 degree angle allows more cars per block; but it also requires more depth. Fitting more parking in, therefore, requires reducing the number of lanes. It also has the added benefit of being safer. Not only does changing the angle of the parking allow for greater parking space depth (no more truck beds sticking out into the travel lane!), it can improve visibility when backing out. 45 degree angle parking is recommended by NC DOT and exists already on Church Street and Jackson Street surrounding the Bell Tower Green.



Example of 45 degree angle parking in a downtown streetscape.

Will reducing the travel lanes from 4 lanes to 3 lanes have an effect on traffic congestion?

Traffic studies support the transition from 4 travel lanes to 3 travel lanes. Traffic counts documenting volume and turning movements were completed at every intersection in the study area. Comparing current "levels of service" (an engineering term to describe delay due to traffic) to the proposed, traffic analysis models found very little change in the "levels of service" at all intersections.

Successful downtowns experience some modest degree of congestion. The opposite – desertion - is certainly not the goal. Instead, the goal is to have a streetscape that enhances downtown as a destination and attracts new customers, residents and businesses. While new growth of businesses would lead to some incremental increase in congestion, this might be considered a "growing pain" of a successful downtown.

What will happen if there is an accident on Main Street?

While each incident is different, the Salisbury Police Department has considerable experience handling

traffic control on two-lane roadways with limited disruption to traffic flow. With three lanes, it is even more possible to direct traffic efficiently. Traffic is easily diverted to parallel routes of Main Street if necessary. Salisbury Police has reported very few accidents in on South and North Main Streets in recent years, most of which have been minor incidents.

How will the plan affect the Christmas parade?

The parade will not be affected. The recommended plan shows a continuous center turn lane for the floats, bands, and dancers to travel thru.

Will left turns be allowed at The Square (Innes and Main)?

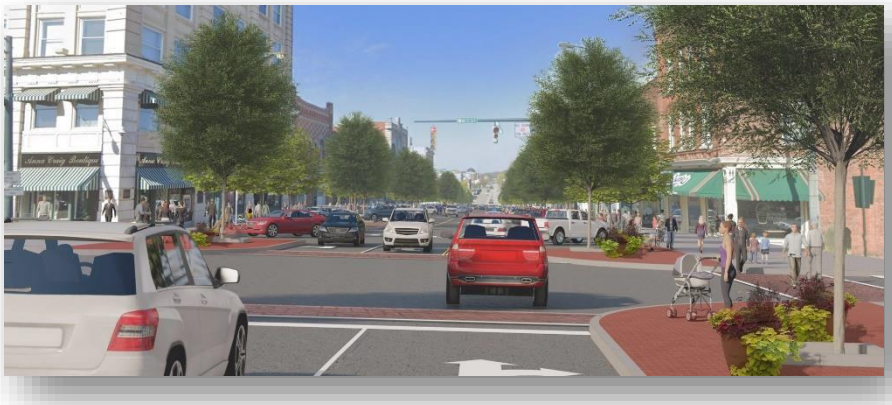
Yes. A three-lane cross section allows for a left turn to be made from Main Street on to Innes Street. The left turns will be "dedicated" meaning that a solid green or red arrow will direct cars when they are allowed to go. Dedicated turn signals are safer than "permissible" turn signals (i.e. blinking or flashing to indicate yield) for both drivers and pedestrians.

Could we have a four-way stop at the Square for pedestrians to cross in each direction?

Engineering staff consulted with NCDOT on a four-way stop at the intersection of Main and Innes (the Square). NCDOT will not allow four-way stops at this time.

What is being done at the Square to improve pedestrian safety?

In addition to what was mentioned above, bump outs are planned at The Square (and all other intersections), which reduces the length pedestrians have to cross the street. In addition, bump outs provide greater visibility for pedestrians who can both see and be seen by vehicles. When both Main Street and Innes Street are resurfaced in 2021, the crosswalks along Innes Street will be replaced with stamped concrete, which will make the cross walks more visible.



This rendering of Innes and Main Street shows stamped concrete crosswalks and curb 'bump-outs' that shorten the distance pedestrians have to cross the intersection.

Where are the details for things like lighting, benches, and trees?

Many of the details come at the next phase of design: construction drawings. Metaphorically speaking, a master plan is like a blueprint of a house (room layout and dimension); construction drawings offer more detail (brick pattern, type of lamp post, species of tree).

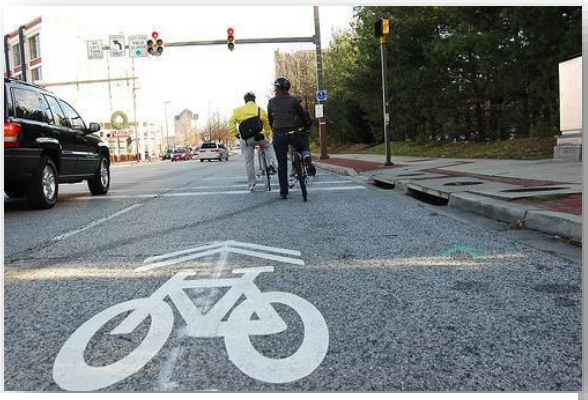
Can bike lanes be added through Downtown?

The plan currently shows bike lanes extending on North Main Street to Kerr Street, and then picking back up on South Main Street at Horah Street. Signage will encourage cyclists to use parallel streets (Lee or

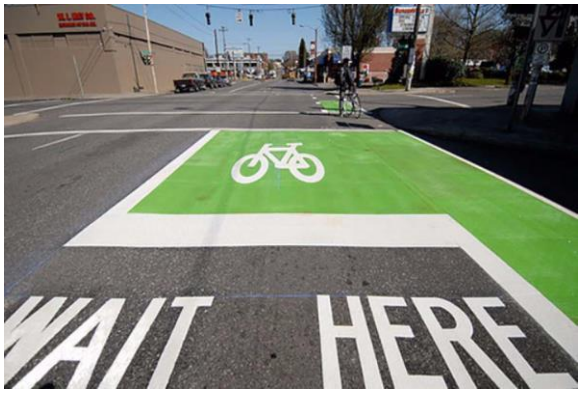
Church) to complete the network. Through the heart of downtown, the roadway width is not wide enough to fit dedicated bike lanes, while maintaining parking on both sides of the street. While bike infrastructure was viewed as important, more people indicated that maximizing parking was a priority in the first round of engagement (Fall 2019).

How can biking be encouraged in Downtown?

Narrowing the street from 4 lanes to 3 lanes and adding bump outs should encourage more drivers to go the posted speed limit, 20 mph. At that speed, the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) says that sharrows (a painted bike symbol) are an acceptable way for bicycles and cars to share the road. While the draft plans regretfully neglected to include those markings, it is the intention to adequately include pavement markings. Bike boxes at intersections were also explored to increase visibility of cyclists, however NCDOT is not allowing bike boxes at this time.



Sharrows are pavement markings indicating that cars and bikes must share the road.



Bike boxes are designated areas at intersections that provide bikes a safe and visible place.

How will deliveries be made with a 3-lane cross section?

Delivery trucks are encouraged to use side streets when making deliveries, but in a 3-lane cross section, a delivery truck will typically park mid-block in the center turn lane, and then cross one lane of traffic to get to the sidewalk. This is common in larger cities (Portland, OR for example). The Master Plan concept does show dedicated delivery zones, staff is working with downtown merchants to put dedicated delivery zones in well thought out locations.

When is NCDOT planning to restripe Main Street?

NC DOT's striping season begins in March and ends in November. The striping plan for Main Street has not been scheduled by NCDOT yet. Length of time is approximately two weeks, and major work will occurovernight. For a period of time, temporary pavement markings will be in place.

How will the plans effect on-street parking?

For the restriping plan, in most instances changing the angle of the parking results in a net increase in the number of parking spaces per block. In the long range master plan, tradeoffs exist between providing parking spaces and spaces for people to sit, eat, and enjoy downtown. Staff felt the recommended master plan offered a balance between providing additional parking by changing the

angle, and expanding opportunities for outdoor dining, a common priority heard during public input. The table below offers a summary of parking counts per block.

Parking Summary				
Stretch	***Existing***	***Dec. Draft Plan***	***Striping Plan***	***Concept Plan***
Lafayette to Franklin	*0*	*0*	*0*	*3*
Franklin to Cemetery	*5*	*5*	*0*	*5*
Cemetery to Kerr	*4*	*4*	*4*	*8*
Kerr to Liberty	*31*	*23*	*40*	*34*
Liberty to Council	*29*	*24*	*39*	*30*
Council to Innes	*38*	*38*	*56*	*41*
Innes to Fisher	*39*	*29*	*50*	*40*
Fisher to Bank	*26*	*32*	*37*	*31*
Bank to Horah	*27*	*30*	*46*	*31*
Horah to Monroe	*0*	*13*	*0*	*0*
Monroe to Military	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*
Military to Thomas	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*
Thomas to Knox	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*
Knox to McCubbins	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*
McCubbins to Chestnut	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*
Total On-Street Parking Spaces	***199***	***198***	***272***	***223***

How will the plans effect handicap parking?

Van accessible handicap spaces are currently marked near intersections where ramps are available to reach the sidewalk. Creating additional bump outs midblock would mean there is opportunity for additional van accessible handicap spaces.

	Total Handicap Parking
Existing	16
Striping Plan	18
Concept Plan	24 (approx. 4/block)

Why not consider reverse angle parking?

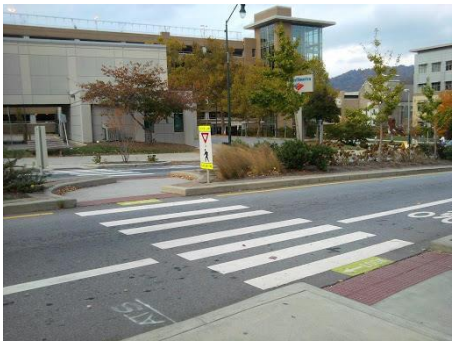
Staff strongly considered reverse angle parking (as opposed to standard "nose in" front angle parking) because studies have shown that it can be a much safer movement. When backing out of a front angle parking space, the driver is furthest away from the potential point of conflict with an on-coming vehicle or bicycle. In reverse angle parking, the driver is in a better position to see clearly before entering traffic lanes. NC DOT still prefers nose-in parking at a 45 degree angle due to lack of familiarity with reverse angle parking. While staff felt that most people would become accustomed to reverse angle parking eventually, initial feedback we received was not positive.

As downtown grows and redevelops, what is the long range plan for parking?

Through one-on-one input meetings many folks asked about a parking deck. The City of Salisbury is conscious of the need for a five-year parking plan to address future development.

What alternatives exist for employee parking?

Through one-on-one meetings staff found that many businesses pay to park in private lots or park a few blocks away in parking lots that do not require payment or have time limits.



Mid-block crossings are crosswalks that do not occur at intersections. They are meant to be highly visible.

Does the plan consider mid-block crossings?

A recent NC DOT policy prohibits midblock crossings within 400 feet of a signalized intersection. This plan initially showed midblock crossings where the pedestrian bump outs are currently located midblock, but were removed following feedback from NC DOT. If the State's policy were to ever change, crossings could be added back in to the design. The crossings would be buffered, and made highly visible, by landscaped medians and signage.

What is the timeframe for completing the long-range vision?

City of Salisbury Staff will be actively seeking opportunities to fund further engineering documents and construction. Completion of the long-range vision will depend on funding available.

What 3D elements will be included in the Master Plan?

Improvements to Salisbury's sidewalks will include new street trees and landscaped areas, outdoor seating, public recycling and trash bins, bike racks, as well as improved pedestrian lighting.